



NEWS RELEASE

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FARMERS, RANCHERS, BUSINESS OWNERS MARK CALENDARS FOR FREE ENERGY WORKSHOP

Beatrice, Neb., Dec. 19, 2005—Area farmers, ranchers and businesses in towns of less than 50,000 population are urged to attend an Energy Efficiency Improvements and Renewable Energy grant workshop on January 5th hosted by Norris Public Power, the City of Beatrice and USDA Rural Development. Workshop will be held at Valentinos' Primavera room, 701 Court Street, in Beatrice from 2-4 p.m. Energy program details, project examples and application materials will be discussed.

Grant funds are available for energy efficiency improvements such as new heating/cooling systems, refrigeration equipment, insulation, new lighting, windows, doors, higher efficiency industrial equipment, irrigation efficiency improvements, grain drying equipment, etc. Funding is also available for renewable systems such as wind, solar, biomass, methane digesters, geothermal projects, etc.

Grants are available for 25 percent of project costs (costs ranging from \$6,000 to \$2 million). The energy grants provide a significant opportunity for farms, ranches and business operations to make considerable energy and dollar saving changes to facilities and equipment. Renewable technology is also an option for some businesses.

USDA Rural Development awarded \$418,348 in energy grants to Nebraska recipients in Fiscal Year 2005 assisting in 36 energy efficiency improvements projects and 1 renewable energy project. Section 9006 of the 2002 Farm Bill established the USDA Rural Development Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements grant program. Since the program's inception, Nebraska has received nearly \$778,000 for 57 energy projects.

For further information contact Cliff Kumm, energy coordinator-USDA Rural Development, (402) 223-3125 ext 4, cliff.kumm@ne.usda.gov, 201 N. 25th St. Beatrice, Neb. 68310.

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